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Chapter 7

Instrumental morality

‘Take all the Palestinians who were stripped at the roadblocks, only because there was concern that some of them were terrorists ... this can become a boiling pot that can explode and cause terrible burns ... which only depends on your understanding and abilities to conduct yourselves with wisdom and determination.’ (Ehud Olmert, Prime Minister of Israel, 11-04-2008)⁸¹

The above quote by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, from a speech made to brigade commanders of the Central Command in an effort to persuade them to make sure that Palestinians at checkpoints were treated better in the future, illustrates an important way of reasoning which can also be found in soldiers’ discourse in the field. The Prime Minister makes a direct link between the behaviour of soldiers at the checkpoints and the accumulation of hate in the Territories, this resulting in terrorist activities. According to his speech, the motivation for behaving correctly should, then, be to avoid such a ‘boiling pot’ and not to treat Palestinians in a moral manner for the sake of doing ‘the right thing’. I have also found such reasoning in the discourse of soldiers and I recognise this as a form of instrumental morality, a term that will be elaborated on shortly.

In the previous chapter, several dominant discursive strategies used by Israeli soldiers serving in the OPT (Occupied Palestinian Territories) were discussed. It was shown how these soldiers use such strategies to explain, justify or legitimize their activities and the decisions they made during their military service. Here, I will give an outline of a specific type of morality which is closely related to the strategies used. I will argue that this type of moral discourse and the behaviour that Israeli soldiers adopt can be typified as ‘instrumental morality’. As seen in the example given above, this type of morality is found when one’s acts or decision-making vis-à-vis another person is carried out by the actor as an instrument to achieve a certain goal which is, in turn, directed to the good of the self or the in-group (and, in the above example, even to the state as a whole). Such behaviour is, then, not motivated by any moral desire to uphold universal human rights; the ‘other’ is often not even genuinely considered.

⁸¹ Haaretz 11-04-2008, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=973968> as accessed on 21-04-2008.

Reasoning and emotion within morality

Since the concept of reasoning is an important one in this chapter, it merits some explanation. In most cases reasoning about an act is seen something as opposed to emotional or spontaneous motivations to act. Especially in the case of moral reasoning, this distinction is often made. Vetlesen, for example, is of the opinion that within morality emotions are important and that morality is, thus, not purely rational (1994). With regard to moral performance, he states that we should understand that ‘moral action is logically preceded by moral judgement, that moral judgement is logically preceded by moral perception, and, further, that the cognitive faculty of representative thinking ... and the emotional faculty of empathy are equally indispensable of the exercise of moral perception and moral judgement’ (1994: 350). Vetlesen, furthermore, writes that ‘emotions anchor us to the *particular* moral circumstance ... to the *here and now*’ (ibid: 4, italics in original). He, thus, explains how before we make a moral judgement and perform moral actions, our emotions lead us to assess the situation we find ourselves in (our moral perception). He uses the work of S. Benhabib to additionally emphasize this point. Her work shows that the moral issues we are concerned with depend deeply on our relationship with others, and thus on our emotions (ibid: 356).

Turiel, however, takes another standpoint emphasizing the rational basis of morality. He points to the centrality of processes of reasoning within moral behaviour (2002). In his criticism of communitarian thought, he attacks the ideas of scholars such as Etzioni and R. Bellah for their reliance on the emotional determination of morality and the influence of the social context on the formation of morality. Turiel believes, in contrast to this communitarian thought, that ‘moral judgements shape social interactions, cultural practices, and reactions to practices’ (2002: 291).

I agree with Vetlesen on the issue of emotions and their importance when speaking about morality and I certainly do not agree with Turiel on this last point. However, when looking at moral behaviour and moral judgement, processes of reasoning should also be considered. These processes of thinking about one’s actions take place mostly after these actions have been carried out rather than during their carrying out. In J. Haidt’s words: ‘moral reasoning is usually a post hoc construction, generated after a judgement has been reached’ (2001: 814). The concept of reasoning is, then, a complex one. In theories on ethics, reasoning means using rationality and being conscious and emotionally detached about one’s decisions and actions. This would exclude intuitive, unconscious moral behaviour and activities (Haidt 2001).

In the case of this study, the behaviour and decision-making of soldiers that was discussed with them had already occurred and their stories, testimonies and thoughts were collected after the fact. This, however, does not mean that these constructions are less valid. It is

important, as Vetlesen and also Haidt want us to realize, to take into account intuition and feelings that influence behaviour affecting split-second decisions where there is no time to reason. Thus we need to be aware of the circumstances our informants were in at the time of the events they are describing and the feelings they are speaking of. These contextual factors were laid out in Part 2 of this work.

Like Haidt, H. Dreyfus (1990) urges us to look at the actual situation a person is in when speaking of his or her moral behaviour. He feels that this should not merely be tied to the process of unemotional reasoning. Listening closely to M. Mandelbaum he writes, 'our moral consciousness expresses itself chiefly in everyday ethical comportment which consists in unreflective, egoless responses to the current interpersonal situation' (1990: 3). He, then, calls for an approach that takes such everyday ethics into account, without giving reasoning more credibility than intuition.

Reasoning in this work, then, does not necessarily indicate that a very long process of detached thought has preceded every activity described. The term is used here when an informant gives a description of the way he came to a decision, or of the reasons he believes made him act in a certain way. At the moment the informant gives his answer, he has, in fact, thought and reasoned about it. As such, his description can be seen as reasoning. Importantly, however, not all actions taken by soldiers are reasoned actions, the physical and especially emotional state the soldiers are in and the relation they have or do not have with the persons in front of them being very influential for their decision-making as well. Both the terms 'reasoning' and 'action' or 'behaviour' are used here, depending on the context within which an action took place and the way the actor speaks about it.

I wish, furthermore, to use a more social approach to morality in general, one in which social contexts and relationships that influence reasoning and intuitive moral behaviour are taken into account. This means that in different situations different logic and decision-making can take place. Within the context of the military, for example, the way of thinking of the soldiers is strongly influenced by the power relations they are part of, their relationship with their comrades and physical and emotional influences. Back home, in the context of the familiar, these same soldiers act and reason in a very different manner. As noted before, in his intuitionist approach, Haidt emphasizes social and cultural influences on the moral judgment of people (2001); J. Miller (1994) also emphasizes the importance of cultural factors when looking at interpersonal moralities. This approach is very valuable as it urges us to look beyond conscious, individual reasoning to understand the moral actions of people within different social and cultural contexts, taking their emotions, intuition and other influences into account.

What is instrumental morality?

In order for a moral action or decision to be labelled as a case of instrumental morality, this action has to be used as an instrument to achieve a specific goal. In their work on business policy, Quinn and Jones look at the moral obligations managers have within an organization. They use the terms instrumental and non-instrumental ethics in their writings to differentiate between the behaviour of managers who 'use the language of ethics to serve the goal of firm value maximization' (1995: 23) and the behaviour of managers whose behaviour is motivated by 'principled moral reasoning' (ibid: 22). This distinction is an important one and it distinguishes different motives that can be present behind particular behaviour. Managers who act in an instrumentally ethical way 'might do what is morally proper, but they do so to increase shareholder wealth' (ibid: 23). Hence, in this case we can still speak of moral action, albeit instrumental.

The same point can be made for Israeli soldiers in the OPT. Their actions vis-à-vis the Palestinians that they encounter can appear to be moral and they can use 'the language of ethics' (ibid.); however, the motivations that triggered them are often not 'principled' but rather serve to achieve a goal that is directed to the good of the self or the in-group. The moral action is not the focal point, this being what could be achieved by the action in favour of the actor himself or his own group.

Although some will question the moral element of such behaviour and will, thus, argue that behaviour geared towards the good of the self or in-group is not moral, I argue that it is. Morality is not only geared towards the more distant 'other' but also to the very close 'other', such as the in-group. Especially because the focus here is not merely on ego-centred activity, but mostly on activities that are directed to the good of the group, or even the state, such behaviour can be called moral. But even acts that are done for the good of the self can be moral when they include others and when 'the language of ethics' (ibid.) is used in which good or bad or right or wrong behaviour is grouped.

According to the well-known theories of social psychology developed by Piaget (1948) and later Kohlberg (1984), instrumental morality is one of the lower stages of moral development a person goes through during his or her lifetime. Kohlberg has divided the moral development of humans into five stages that range from unilateralism (where someone does not have an eye for the circumstances of a situation and only focuses on power relations) to recognition of universal human rights and a hierarchy of priorities. There is also a sixth stage, one which not many people reach according to Kohlberg, within which a very high degree of reasoning is used and all different situations and possibilities are considered.

Instrumental morality would, according to this scheme, be the second stage and thus stands relatively low on the moral development ladder. The most important characteristic here is equal reciprocity, where one decides on one's action according to what is expected back from the person the action is directed to (what is in it for me). A (moral) action is, then, used to gain something back; such action can, thus, be called instrumental.

As mentioned earlier, the theories of Kohlberg have been severely criticized by other psychologists such as Bandura (1991) for not being 'realistic' and for not using real-life situations and social contexts in which decisions are actually made. The most important criticism, however, is made by C. Gilligan (1982) in a feminist critique that accused Kohlberg of being gender (male) biased. I agree on many points with these critics with his higher regard for detached moral reasoning over intuition being particularly disputable.

What I would like to propose here is the idea of following the existence of different kinds of moralities, each of which take different aspects into consideration. These different kinds of moralities are not necessarily found on a vertical scale as they are in Kohlberg's work. Different moral interpretations and behaviour can be used by the same person, within different contexts, and hence do not necessarily only exist on a developmental scale.

As stated before, by morality being instrumental I am referring to ways of behaviour with an underlying reasoning that has a certain goal beyond 'doing the right thing' for the sake of just that: doing the right thing. This goal, then, goes beyond simply treating a human being in a correct way because he or she is a human being. The behaviour of a person is used as an instrument to gain something else, for himself or for others close to him. The 'other' who is necessarily present when we speak of moral acts is not, or hardly, considered here, although he or she is affected, sometimes even positively, by such instrumental moral behaviour. Looking from the outside, such behaviour seems to be in accordance with moral values; people are helped and seemingly treated with respect. The reasoning behind such behaviour, however, can make it instrumental if they are 'self-centred' or 'in-group-centred' and if general universal rights are not taken into consideration.

The reasoned moral behaviour of Israeli soldiers seems to be an instrumental one in many cases. A soldier can, for example, refrain from hitting Palestinians at a checkpoint or help someone who has difficulty walking. When a soldier then explains this behaviour in terms of avoiding punishment from the officer in charge or preventing giving the IDF a bad name, this behaviour comes to be seen in a different light, though.

The question that remains is whether moral action that is instrumental should necessarily be condemned. One could even argue that most human conduct, while being perceived as moral,

has an instrumental character. It is my opinion that instrumental behaviour does not necessarily need to be condemned at all times. However, scrutinizing it gives us the chance to understand more about the actual motivations for actions and allows us to look beyond the surface of mere observation. Furthermore, behaving morally because of instrumental considerations means that in other instances, where no one is watching or judging, immoral behaviour can be more easily displayed. Would behaviour in this instance be non-instrumental, would motives be more 'pure' and what behaviour would we expect to see?. The importance of the 'gaze' when talking about instrumental ethics will, in fact, turn out to be considerable. Without a watching eye, no performance has to be put on (see Goffman 1959) and the considerations at work change.

In this chapter I will discuss this instrumentally motivated morality and the ways it is found in the discourse and behaviour of soldiers. From speaking to soldiers, I have identified morality instrumental within three different dimensions and this chapter will be divided accordingly: the first part will discuss behaviour and reasoning in which the good of the self, i.e. of the soldier himself, is highlighted; the second part will deal with the image and 'good name' of the military and of one's unit; and the last part will discuss the state as a focal point for the instrumental morality of Israeli soldiers. In this third part I will look at soldiers' discourse that has a more abstract and ideological tone, directed at promoting the good name of the state of Israel in the eyes of the international world. Within every one of these dimensions, I will discuss soldiers' actions and reasoning and the way these can be categorized as instrumental.

7.1 The personal

When an actor acts according to considerations of what is in it for him or her, actions become instrumental on a personal or ego-centred level. To accomplish maximal personal gain through action, the concept of obedience is important for soldiers to keep in mind. In this case, the fear that is linked to this obedience is a motivating force, for if one does not obey one's superiors one could be punished. Soldiers will try to avoid this punishment and to 'save themselves' from this at all times. In other words, obedience becomes instrumental to them.

We could also link this to the issue of discipline within the military. Soldiers are taught to behave according to strict rules and their behaviour is 'on display' and under scrutiny at most times. This 'disciplinary gaze' of the military is, then, an important and powerful factor that influences soldiers' behaviour. Another goal soldiers seek to achieve on the personal level, which will be discussed here, is to 'stay a human being' (as soldiers call it) or 'to keep their human dignity'.

Avoiding punishment

Avoiding being told off by a superior and avoiding actual punishment for one's deeds is a motive for actions that many soldiers mention. This is, again, closely related to the issue of obedience within the military and the power this dictum has over soldiers. The fear of being caught disobeying a superior can be a strong motivator for soldiers' actions. This becomes clear from the answer Barak, a soldier from the Golani Brigade, gives when asked about the code of ethics and the way he as a soldier was informed about it:

'Only in basic training, it's bullshit, you don't use it. Like purity of arms, you know that if you forget your gun your officer will leave you on Saturday in the base so you take your weapon. You know that if you act to the Arab with too much violence the officer will tell you, they don't say do whatever you want. Me and my friends, we never hit a person at a check post or something, just like that. Never happened.' (2)

What strikes one immediately, besides his dismissal of the code of ethics as 'bullshit', is the motivation Barak gives for behaving in a correct way; he wants to avoid the criticism of or punishment from his superiors. His words are similar to what Hartley writes on his experiences with the US army in Iraq: 'in the military there is a hierarchy because it is the easiest way to get things done' (2006: 262). The fear of being reprimanded by one's superiors is one of the dominant motivators for soldiers' action; behaving according to the books or strictly following the orders of commanders is, then, often instrumentally motivated.

Furthermore, such behaviour is adopted to impress the commander. Hence, it is behaviour that needs to be seen and which is usually displayed when the commander is present. This makes the behaviour instrumental as it is not performed out of a belief that it is the only right or just thing to do but to impress others or to avoid their disapproval. In a way, soldiers present an 'ideal', humane soldier to their commanders.

In the following example, Shmuel talks about his unit from the Givati Brigade and the feelings of revenge some soldiers had after a comrade was killed. They did not act upon it, in Shmuel's words to a large extent because they were afraid of getting into trouble:

'I believe this feeling exists, like we want to get back at them. Again, in my unit, I didn't see things like that. Our unit was like, everyone talked and talked but when it came to doing they didn't ... I think also they were afraid, well not afraid, but you are

scared of those things because it can get you into trouble. Also if they thought about it, they knew they shouldn't [*lo kidat*].' (19)

Assaf, a *kibbutz* member who served as a squad commander in the Golani Brigade, makes the influence superiors have on soldiers even clearer. He talks here about a difficult incident that occurred during his service, when a small child was accidentally killed by the Israeli military during a patrol. During this incident there was chaos all around, while the child was dying in the back of the military vehicle Assaf was sitting in. His behaviour, however, was led by fear of the high military superiors who came to investigate the scene of the incident and because of this he did not confront anyone directly about the dying child:

'You're in this rush [*atraj*]⁸² it is more fright, you don't get in shock or become sad, because you're afraid because of your function, you don't want to make any mistakes with your weapon, with things like that. The battalion commander and the brigade commander, and everyone comes, everyone is stressed when the higher ups [*falafelim*]⁸³ come. There is this stress to be a good soldier, motivated, with all this fright you don't have time to think clearly, in the end the brigade commander is also a human being you could go to him and say listen this kid died, just like that. I didn't dare to and it's maybe easy to say now and as a reservist I would maybe have said that, but as a soldier... if my brigade commander would hit me with a whip I wouldn't tell him it's not okay.' (9)

Adam, a company commander, reaffirms the influential quality that commanders have:

'I think that what interests the soldiers is not doing it [hitting people] in front of the company commander, more than not to hurt Arabs. He will prefer that the Arab will sit another hour in the heat or cold and wait for the company commander than that he would decide himself. At the end of the day he stands in front of the commander, he takes care of the promotions, if he goes home. It's his mother and father. Like in school, don't tell my father.' (1)

In this case not hurting a Palestinian, which in principle is inhibitive moral agentic behaviour (Bandura 2002), is motivated by fear of the scrutiny of the commander, not by the

⁸² Literally: craziness.

⁸³ *Falafelim* is slang for high-ranking military officials referring to the insignia on their shoulder.

realization that it is morally wrong. We could say that this soldier has internalized the disciplinary gaze of the military that was mentioned earlier. What Adam conveys here, furthermore, is the fact that soldiers find it hard, at times, to make a decision and prefer a Palestinian to suffer a bit longer rather than to make a wrong decision for which they could then be punished. The company commander has a great deal of power over the soldiers, he is their ‘mother and father’ and hence his influence on the behaviour of soldiers and their decision-making is immense.

Liron, coming from the Nahal Brigade, also emphasized the power commanders have over their soldiers. Depending on whom the commander is, the soldiers will adjust their behaviour so as to not get into trouble or receive punishment for their acts:

‘In the end it comes down to the platoon commander who is 23 or company commander who is 25. They have to work more with them on these issues. Because soldiers are in a group, they are very flexible but if there is a platoon commander of whom they know [he won’t allow] ... such a thing as hitting someone, there is no ... there is no room for games [*ein efes*], there is no violence without meaning, and he [the commander] will catch them. Soldiers are very afraid.’ (12)

Touching upon the crucial issue of being seen or scrutinized by other parties such as commanders, but also by ‘the outside world’ (e.g. human rights organizations), Yariv realizes the power these ‘onlookers’ have. In other words, he appreciates the power of their gaze in a Foucaultian sense (see Foucault 1995). Because it is such an open checkpoint, he says, with others watching the soldiers, the latter tend to be less violent and do not abuse Arabs since this could lead to punishment by their commanders or to contributing to the bad image of the IDF as a whole, a subject I shall discuss shortly.

‘I’m a very leftist person in my opinion, so if I saw it, I would voice my opinion. I’ll tell you, the checkpoint I was at, was the Tapuach checkpoint, it’s a checkpoint that is very famous, many organizations there, Machsom Watch,⁸⁴ and ... it’s not a checkpoint somewhere far away where people don’t see what is happening. It’s a checkpoint that is very problematic from a ... people can’t do there whatever they want. They can say if they can go through or not, but not abuse Arabs or things like that, you can’t at that checkpoint.’ (25)

⁸⁴ Machsom Watch is an organization of Israeli Jewish women, mostly elderly, who spend time at the checkpoints on a daily basis to observe the flow of the Palestinians through them and to help Palestinians with procedures when necessary. Furthermore, they write reports about everything they witness and publicize this. See www.machsomwatch.org.

Dror, who served with the paratroopers, gives another example of this 'fear' that soldiers feel, looking at this phenomenon as a commander. He realizes that from the moment he leaves the checkpoint his soldiers act in ways he would not approve of:

'Personally it didn't happen to me at the checkpoints, but it's different if you're at the checkpoint as officer with your soldiers and everyone "walks on eggs" they are very careful, but if you're not there... I know stories. (4)

When he was asked about the issues that drive the soldiers or motivate them and whether the fear of punishment was influential, he answered:

'First of all I'm sure for 100% that this is one of things that drives them ... but of course, those who think logically, that are able to think on a higher level, then I'm sure they don't need the officer there. But they also get ... it's a soldier that he gets in a niche, that they [the soldiers] say "he's not here lets do it", even if before you didn't want to [do such a thing]. But that there is a commander it influences, like when you were little you acted different than with your parents, you search your limits. Let's call it an analogy. I would try to change a phase in them; that they also would act like that when you're not there. That's the human aspect that you want to get to them, and the logic.' (4)

As a commander, Dror thus wanted his soldiers to mature and to *think* about their actions, to behave in a morally professional way. How commanders actually try to make their soldiers grasp more deeply why they have to carry out certain activities and not just do them because they do not want to get into trouble, is an interesting issue. In Golan's words, it all depends on the soldiers themselves, on their willingness to learn and on the different commanders; not all commanders are inclined to instil such understanding in their soldiers. We could see this before when having soldiers 'not think too much' was a strategy propagated by some commanders.

'It depends on the soldier. I think that a good commander, maybe in the beginning the soldier does it because the commander is there, but to bring it to him so he also will do it when he is not there. It depends on the soldiers and also on the

commander that doesn't think like that. It can be that a soldier has been on duty with you, goes to sleep and wakes up to work with another commander with different thoughts.' (7)

Such an understanding should ideally result in proper moral behaviour in the eyes of these commanders. However, the reasons given by commanders for behaving in a particular way are often instrumental by nature as well, as we shall see shortly. The understanding instilled in soldiers does not guarantee a less instrumental approach.

In all of the cases above, we have seen examples of soldiers' moral behaviour and reasoning driven by fear of commanders and their power to punish them. Proper behaviour towards Palestinians was displayed because soldiers knew commanders expected this from them. I argue that this fear of punishment gives this behaviour and reasoning a strong instrumental character.

Keeping my human dignity

Earlier we saw how soldiers refer to ideas about 'our own humanity' and 'our own human dignity'. Maoz also mentions this in her work when she notes that 'victimizers are also described as using the mechanisms of "paradoxical morality" to preserve a human image of themselves' (2001: 246). Within this discourse, the concern of Israeli soldiers was not so much the well-being of the other, the Palestinian in this case, as their own 'saneness' and the preservation of their intrinsic human properties i.e. being a moral human being. Eviatar, in a fragment of the interview that was used earlier, puts this very clearly:

'If we need to check a car, we will get everything out of the car. The question is how you do it. You don't throw anything, you don't start messing in his stuff but you ask the person to take the stuff out of the car. Maybe it doesn't interest the person if you do it in a polite way, but it's more to keep our human dignity [*tselem enosh*].' (5)

This preoccupation with the moral well-being of the self, the effort to keep the moral characteristics of the self intact, clearly represents a case of instrumental morality. Soldiers who reason in this fashion have a clear goal in mind, a goal that is principally directed to their own feelings of worth and much less towards the well-being of others. They behave morally, albeit with an instrumental touch.

Golan told me a striking story of an arrest operation after which he found himself in the back of the military vehicle with an arrestee. He noticed that they had both been born in the same year and tried to make conversation through an interpreter:

‘When I was sitting with the terrorist, it was very important for me to have some kind of contact, maybe from naivety, I was determined to stay a human being and not become a machine of hate and fear.’ (7)

As becomes clear from his words, this effort to make conversation with the Palestinian man sitting next to him, handcuffed and blindfolded, has a clear goal, namely that of making Golan feel like a human being and not ‘a machine’. This conversation was, then, not initially instigated in order to understand the arrestee but in order for the soldier to feel he was doing a good thing as a human being.

In the next section I will take as my departure point a more abstract level, the level of the group, may this be the IDF as a whole, the unit of the soldiers or their direct comrades. We will see the same mechanisms used here as within the personal dimension, only now these are directed to the in-group of the soldiers.

7.2 The group

In the case of an instrumental discourse on the level of the group or institution of which the soldiers form part, their considerations for making decisions or behaving in a certain way (or for refraining from certain behaviour) are made with the best interests of the group in mind. On this level, the behaviour of soldiers could, for example, be motivated by trying to avoid ‘giving the military a bad name’.

The relationship between in-group and out-group will turn out to be important here and it needs to be mentioned in the context of instrumental behaviour. The ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy is very central to the way Israeli soldiers see their surroundings. The ‘other’ or ‘them’ is represented by the Palestinians who are perceived as being different on almost all levels; cultural, religious and moral. The preservation of the self or the in-group seems, then, to be more important than the well-being of this ‘other’ who is closely identified with the enemy in general. Instrumental moral behaviour should, then, be seen with these dynamics of in-group and out-group in mind, as these can encourage such behaviour and reasoning.

Because the instrumental behaviour of soldiers on this level is often connected to the preservation of a certain moral status that they (believe they) have, I will begin by shedding some

light on the moral hierarchy of units as seen through the eyes of the soldiers. Understanding this 'moral competition' and the meaning of having a moral image for soldiers will clarify the way soldiers try to act in ways that, as an end result, cast their behaviour in a favourable light.

Morality as status symbol: protecting the moral image of the unit

As already discussed in the introductory part of this study, when the Jewish State was established, the ideal of the 'New Jew', who was the antithesis of the weak Diaspora Jew persecuted in Europe, was very profoundly felt. This 'New Jew' was physically strong, tanned and worked the land as well as defending his new homeland. He was, furthermore, of European, Ashkenazi descent, as were the founders of the state. He became the embodiment of the new defence establishment, the IDF. 'From its inception the Israeli army was seen as a "people's army", a force comprised of civilians ... in this manner, a strong connection was forged between different facets of identity: Judaism, manhood, and military service ... that constituted a dominant idea that to be Israeli in the "full" sense of the word implies being Jewish, male, and to serve in the military' (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2007: 3). According to the state leaders, the Israeli army was, then, to be a melting pot where a new 'people' would be formed. In Levy's words, 'a structure of direct convertibility between military participation and social reward was created, showing a clear replication of the military hierarchy in the social sphere, a process instrumental in shaping the ethnic-class structure of the Israeli society' (2003: 74).

From the 1970s onwards, however, new voices appeared that challenged the values of this ideal citizenship. Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari show the need for the IDF to manage new voices by dealing with the call for women to go into combat and the status of Druze and Bedouin soldiers, Palestinians and new immigrants. The IDF used mechanisms of support, exclusion, management of information and regulated assignation to deal with these 'threats ... to the idea of a people's army' (2007: 10).

The last point they touch upon, the regulated assignation by the IDF, is important in order to understand the differences that have been produced between different units within the military. Members of specific groups such as *kibbutz* and *moshav* members were often assigned to specific units which then became closely identified with the Jewish, Ashkenazi ideal. Others, such as Druze and Bedouin soldiers, but also Jewish soldiers of Arab descent, were assigned to different units and battalions that did not have strong elitist associations. In this way, the dominant position of those identified with the ideal citizen was maintained.

This ethnic stratification of the IDF is a 'sacred cow', as Levy puts it, and is difficult to investigate as there is no official record to confirm it. He circumvented this problem by comparing casualty records from different wars and looking at the ethnic diversity of the victims,

indeed finding a significant drop in Ashkenazi casualties in the Al-Aqsa Intifada as compared to the First Lebanon War (Levy 2006).

Often, between the lines, soldiers referred to the differences between units and hinted at a certain moral hierarchy that was connected to the ethnic background of the soldiers. Especially when answering questions about witnessing the violent behaviour of soldiers, these differences were mentioned. Stories of such behaviour had been heard in abundance, soldiers stated, but usually not within one's own unit. It was almost always other soldiers who behaved in a bad and improper manner and these others, often from units with less prestige, were often perceived to be more aggressive and 'caring less'. They often belonged to infantry battalions such as the *Golani* and *Givati* and their behaviour was linked to their presumed rightist political orientation and their Oriental background.

Most of the soldiers interviewed were part of the white, Ashkenazi elite and came, in their own words, from fairly leftist upbringings. As Dar et al. write about education in the kibbutz environment in Israel, it 'is known for its socialist, progressive, and humanist accents and its tradition of concentrating on clarification of moral issues' (2000: 288). Furthermore, they show that 'research has repeatedly shown that kibbutz youth are distinguished by their tolerance towards Arabs and a pacific approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict' (ibid.).

In the following quote, Doron links the fact that he has not witnessed many instances of aggressive behaviour or harassment by soldiers to his carrying out his service with the paratroopers. He assumes that, for reasons that are apparent to him, i.e. the background and education of the members of this unit, his unit behaves in a morally superior manner to the soldiers from different battalions:

'No, about things like that we wouldn't talk, almost not at all. Listen, I don't know if it's because I was in the paratroopers, because I did hear about a lot of stories, a lot of incidents, of other brigades, of other soldiers that treat them different, it's different from soldiers to soldiers, but in general we wouldn't talk about it, I also know if someone catches you hit or give someone a smack, you are out, I get into jail because of that. No way [*haval al hazman*]⁸⁵, you can't do whatever you want.' (23)

Even though times have changed and shifts in how different social groups are integrated within the IDF have occurred, some units or battalion are still identified with specific groups from society which are associated with a specific political orientation. The Nahal 50 Battalion, in

⁸⁵ Literally: a waste of time.

particular, is still strongly identified with its idealist, socialist background and is perceived as consisting of the most morally superior soldiers of the IDF. The units and battalions that comprise Nahal 50 are, then, generally perceived (by themselves and others) to be morally superior, this notion being used as a status symbol. That certain units are different in their socio-economic make-up was clarified by Shmuel who realized very early on in his service with the Givati Battalion that he was 'special':

'I was quite special there in the unit, of course I was the only *kibbutznik*,⁸⁶ no doubt, and also with political discussions, you know, let's say there weren't any leftists there... I really had to stand up for my point of view.' (19)

In his unit, being from a leftist *kibbutz* environment made Shmuel different on several levels, such as those of his political opinions and personal background. He had to make a conscious effort to stick to his more leftist ideals.

In the following example Golan makes clear that his corps, the artillery, was made-up out of people of a 'higher standard' than many other military divisions. He talks of human material or '*khomer gelem enoshi*' which is, in his opinion, of a higher quality in the artillery. In other words, people in this corps are (morally) superior.

'The artillery is also of a higher standard [*khomer gelem enoshi*]. They really took the values seriously.' (7)

'I was the only one from the artillery, the rest were from the infantry, all commanders, you don't believe the people, they don't think, they don't have the same values, they don't see the big picture... Probably in the infantry they don't put an emphasis on professionalism and stuff, the infantry is more like a neighbourhood [*skhuna*].'⁸⁷ (7)

Golan makes a clear connection between sections of the military being different in social composition and the moral hierarchy existing between them when he speaks about values that some have and some do not. Yariv even gives an indication that this difference in character between battalions or units is *used* by the military when he says:

⁸⁶ A *kibbutznik* is the popular term for a member of a *Kibbutz* community.

⁸⁷ The term *skhuna* or neighbourhood is used to point at the brotherly friendship combined with an easygoing atmosphere to be found in some city neighbourhoods and also in some military units, usually those consisting of soldiers of Jewish Arabic descent.

‘My unit ... the company commander, the brigade commander ... to tell you [they are] more then brigades as Golani and Givati ...but let’s say that a lot of people in my unit have opinions like me. Especially in the brigade ... that’s why they don’t send this brigade to very problematic places like Gaza.’ (25)

By ‘opinions like me’, Yariv points out his own leftist political ideas, which he repeatedly emphasized during the interview. His battalion, the elite battalion of the Nahal, was not sent to places like the Gaza strip, according to Yariv, because of the need of the military for units that would be more aggressive, perhaps even less deliberative. Such considerations on the part of the military cannot be proven here, but the testimony provided does give us an indication of how the moral hierarchy between units can have its effects. Guy presents a similar argument about the presence of Nahal 50 soldiers in Hebron:

‘To keep the restraint. Really. “*Nahlowim*”⁸⁸ are more relaxed, more deliberation, they are from kibbutzim and moshavim [*bnei meshekim*], it’s like that, it’s obvious.’ (29)

Interestingly, although the idea of a certain moral hierarchy between units is distributed widely across the different divisions of the IDF, it does not seem that being ‘less moral’ is perceived as an insult. Those indirectly accused of this emphasize the friendship in their own units (neighbourhood or *shekhuna*) and laugh at the soldiers from other units for being ‘softies’.

It seems important, then, for some units to have a moral image that makes them look more professional and serious than others. If they follow the orders and behave as they should, they are perceived as more professional and their status is kept intact. If they behaved differently, more aggressively for example, this could ruin their status and lead to them not being taken seriously. Other units associated with greater aggression and less emphasis on moral behaviour seem to legitimize their image and their actions by pointing at the special character of their units, where solidarity and friendship are much more valued.

Assaf gives an example of how commanders tried to protect the name of his battalion (Golani), which in the eyes of outsiders (and even other military units) is aggressive. We can see the perceived moral hierarchy between units discussed earlier here. It is mentioned in an effort to prove their image wrong:

⁸⁸ *Nahlowim* is the nickname for soldiers of the Nahal Brigade.

‘The company commander had a talk with the soldiers because they said Golani, Arabs,⁸⁹ they said Golani is crazy and all, he said that if you have someone and he made problems and you tie him down, that’s enough until you get him to the Shabak [General Security Service].’ (9)

This commander warns his soldiers that they should not beat prisoners but should treat them according to the rules if they want to get rid of their negative image. Rami, who served with the paratroopers, reinforces the aggressive image of the Golani Battalion. He talks about the way he and his comrades would search a house:

‘You don’t take it out and throw it in the room, yeah, maybe in Golani ... we didn’t. Maybe something would be on the floor, it would take him [the inhabitant of the house] maybe an hour or two hours to clean up the house afterwards.’ (10)

This aside into the moral reputation of different units has been necessary in order to show how this has an effect on the instrumental behaviour of soldiers at the level of their units. In order to uphold their unit’s or battalion’s status of being moral, they have to at least be *seen* to be moral professionals. To accomplish this, soldiers emphasize their moral behaviour in speech, but also in behaviour. This behaviour, if motivated by the desire to uphold the prestigious moral status of the group, can be classified as instrumental.

Protecting your soldiers or your comrades

‘The soldier must want his Regiment, his comrades and those around him to survive. The Regiment is his family, where he is not alone ... the Regiment provides the opportunity for him to become the best soldier in the world; he fights for something more than himself; he fights for his comrades and the Regiment; and indirectly, for his home and his family’ (from a Canadian military document in Winslow 1997: 74)

Feelings of solidarity and comradeship are issues deeply interconnected with military life and they are important motivations for soldiers to go into combat. Grossman quotes G. Dyer who writes that this strong feeling of accountability towards your comrades is ‘a special kind of love that has nothing to do with sex or idealism’ (1995: 150). While there are arguments that say

⁸⁹ Soldiers from this battalion are presumably being called ‘Arabs’ as many are of Jewish Arab descent.

that this comradeship does border on sexual desire (see, for example, Kaplan 2002; Sasson-Levy 2007), Dyer is right in saying that feelings between soldiers could be called a special kind of love, one which goes very deep and which is immensely important for soldiers.

Many works on the military have emphasized these strong feelings and most authors have found that the motivation to fight first of all comes from the will not to let down your buddies (see, for example, Grossman 1995; Holmes 1985). Having a group around you makes the meta-motivations, such as ideological ideas, less important because what you do, you really do for your comrades with whom you share your direct experiences.

An important motivation for the actions or inaction of soldiers is, then, the fear that they or their comrades will get hurt. When assessing an operation, it is often not judged by its moral standards but by how dangerous it is for the Force. Another consideration can, furthermore, be whether such an operation or activity is hard on the soldiers physically or mentally. In the following example this becomes clear. This soldier from an elite paratrooper unit tells the interviewer from *Breaking the Silence* about a specific dangerous operation his unit was sent to take part in:

‘We talked about it with the whole unit. What occupied the minds of the unit was especially, it was important for the unit, this should be said to its benefit, especially the madness, it seems mad to us from the point of view of risking the Force, we weren’t a unit of morons that went like “Yeah! we got it.” The whole company was like “what a good unit you are”, if we were the best unit we would have gotten this operation and we were only whining and everyone said “why are you whining” and we said “they are sending us to die, if you want, you can take this operation”. That was the atmosphere amongst the unit, especially because of the risk for the Force. From a moral point of view they didn’t care because they were afraid for themselves. We especially doubted the moral side, also to think less about the fear for the operation itself.’ (BS 58/59)

The fear of all soldiers is clearly present in this example, while moral considerations are only taken into account by the unit of the soldier who is giving the testimony. The others judge the operation according to how it could hurt the soldiers physically, not according to how it could hurt the Palestinians involved or according to whether it is morally acceptable.

In what other ways the behaviour of soldiers or commanders is geared towards their own group, their soldiers' or their comrades' safety, we can make out from Dror's words. Here is a commander who clearly draws the line when it comes to the safety of his soldiers:

'In the reserves what I always say; don't know if it's more or less important, do me a favour: take care of yourself. That's the most important, you have to do the job but ... and here I'm ready to pay the price of warmth and humanity, I'd rather have my soldier in one piece than a Palestinian that's crying. This cold decision like I told you before.' (4)

The fact that a minor action on the part of a soldier could have major repercussions is something explained by Nir when he says that it is better for a soldier to misidentify a suspect than to take the risk of one of the soldiers getting hurt. Mistakes by soldiers, such as harming an innocent Palestinian during an operation, are, then, tolerated if they ostensibly serve to protect the lives of soldiers:

'You prefer to make a little mistake in identifying or something like that' (Q: 'Than something happening to the soldiers?') 'Yes than to make a little mistake and it leads to something bigger.' (14)

This issue of the safety of one's soldiers (as a commander) and of one's comrades (as a soldier) appears again and again in the stories of soldiers. It is clear that when it comes to protecting soldiers' lives, almost everything is permitted. As Adam explains, it is not only your comrade you are protecting, it is also your friend:

'If you are fired at, and you or your soldiers are at risk, you shoot. Even when its not about the soldiers who are your responsibility, but when it's about your friend! It's very clear. If you think you see someone running to your friend with a knife, shoot at him.' (1)

Important here, then, is the issue of solidarity and friendship between soldiers and the influence this strong bond has on their behaviour towards the 'other', the Palestinians. When any kind of group is very close-knit, its behaviour and reactions towards the outside world can become very harsh because of the effort to protect the in-group. As Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari

write 'the Arab is the enemy against which one is fighting, and the "other" through which Jewish Israeli identity in general and that of the warrior in particular are defined' (2007: 7).

When the outside group is one that is identified with the enemy, as is the case for Palestinian civilians, this can especially influence soldiers' behaviour and moral decision-making, turning it inwards as we saw in the cases above. The behaviour of the soldiers can still be seen as moral but this morality is directed towards themselves and towards their comrades and can, hence, be categorized as instrumental behaviour.

Protecting the image of the IDF

'He won't shoot in the crowd, if besides this Arab with a M16 he shoots another ten Arabs, we would look very bad. The soldier wouldn't want that ... responsibility.' (1)

Another matter of interest for Israeli soldiers was the image of the IDF as a whole. It appears that the soldiers are very aware of the way the world sees the IDF and thus sees them. As already touched upon before, soldiers would behave in a 'proper' way when in sight of other people not connected to the IDF. This was not only for their own good, but also for the good of the IDF. They made an effort to protect the IDF from external criticism to avoid staining its name. Snir gives his view of how easily, through misunderstandings on the part of outsiders, the military and its soldiers can get a bad name, undeserved in his opinion:

'You can't always talk about what you are doing. There is a big fear in the IDF today to talk to the media. You are not allowed to talk to the media, in any case. They can also hurt their company. For example the papers write about a soldier of Givati in Gaza, just the soldier started laughing or something; they take it out of proportion, so they protect their own company. For example a soldier can say to his Ethiopian friend that he has been sleeping in the same room with for 3 years, "*Ya kushi*"⁹⁰ as a joke. A journalist hears that, immediately sensation. So it's not only fear of the military, but also it's about practical things ... They call Ethiopians "*kushim*" the battalion commander comes and takes the company apart, sends this guy to jail.' (11)

The point Snir is making here is the fact that the outsider, the media in this case, can hurt the soldiers through misinterpretation of their 'joking'. This outsider then accuses them of

⁹⁰ *Kushi* is a derogatory name for blacks in Israel, usually Ethiopians, comparable to 'nigger' in English.

racism, for example, and alerts the public accordingly which can then lead to a reaction by the higher commanders such as isolating the soldiers from their comrades or even arresting them. This is the reason that soldiers, in Snir's opinion, should refrain from speaking to the media: it could 'hurt their company'. Coming back to the concept of the gaze, we could say that these soldiers have internalized the power of the disciplinary gaze of the media; they take it into account during everything they do and, when possible, try to avoid it. Nir, a commander from the Nahal Battalion tells of how he and his comrades would be careful when searching Palestinian houses. When he explains their motivation for behaving in this way, he says:

'not to break anything, so they won't accuse us later that we destroyed things. We would never touch, that's it.' (14)

Nir emphasizes here that he and his comrades would be careful not to break anything so that 'they', which could be their superiors but which could also be external observers such as human rights organizations, would not criticize or punish them for this.

Another motivation for soldiers' actions related to the protection of the good name of the military is to avoid looking 'weak' in the eyes of the Palestinians. Looking weak could lead to increased attacks or to losing the upper hand in the power dynamics that exist between Palestinian civilians and the soldiers. Dror, who was a commander with the paratroopers and who was very motivated while serving in the IDF, explains a dilemma he had, which will make this point clearer:

'One of my dilemmas was, and that's why I didn't like to do checkpoints, because it's a case ... you really meet the population, not the terrorist. Now go and be selective, on the colour of eyes, if he has a beard, he's aggressive, he's not, he is thin, he is fat. The dilemma that I had was you think about the slap that the commander gave or the soldiers gave, not that it happened to me but I heard it from stories. You wonder if this slap came to the person that deserved it ... or you slapped someone that believed in the checkpoint or in the IDF, he didn't like it but somehow he believed and now ... think about the little boy that saw his father being slapped ... It's done; you can't work on that anymore. And there are those commanders, they keep children close to the soldiers, they know they don't like the field food [*hamgasiot*] and they would pass it to the children. Now go figure if you give it to a child that thinks these soldiers are weaklings [*feierim*] or maybe you gave it to a child that will grow up

and would respect, most or a lot of the Palestinian population has respect for the IDF. I don't know if this is because of the media or because they met the IDF and saw a person that treated them with respect.' (4)

The dilemma described here is the following: once a soldier hits someone or gives a kid some extra food, for example, he does not know what the effect of this action will be, what the consequences are. He could appear to be weak, for example, when treating the population with a soft hand; if he treats them harshly and aggressively, on the other hand, he can generate more hatred. The thoughts behind both behavioural patterns, 'soft' or aggressive, is, however, the same; to achieve a strong, good image for the IDF in the eyes of the Palestinian population and to reduce feelings of hatred and, thus, the possibility of more attacks. Earlier we heard similar thoughts expressed by the Prime Minister of Israel.

Nir reasons in a similar fashion. As soldiers, he says:

'You want them to live, not to make their [the Palestinians] lives unbearable in a way that will cause bitterness and chaos [*balagan*] on their side, a lack of will or ...not to bring them from this side to the other side, to the haters. However absurd it may sound because we lock them in their houses, but where possible let them live a private ... life. Not to get in the way of their way of life. But this is all within the limits of the possible and the safe of course ... for the hatred not to increase. Of course the hatred will increase, and you know that [it] doesn't stop ... but again, as little as possible, and that the contact, if you have contact with him, that it would be as short as possible.' (14)

Another example in which the effects of one's actions are taken into account when deliberating whether to carry them out or not is given by Guy. As a commander in the paratroopers he found himself in a situation where he had to make a swift decision that could lead to an innocent's death but which could also save the lives of others. One night, he observed a Palestinian man with a donkey and a large gas canister during a stakeout. His initial thought was that this could be the attacker they were on the lookout for and that it was a bomb that the man was carrying. On looking more closely, though, he saw an old man walking along with a young boy, probably his grandson, taking a gas canister to his home:

‘So this thing about making the decision, it’s crazy ... we saved our good name, he got away ... and luck that I got so much balance to decide. Here is this old man with the gas canister that could be a bomb, if I would have shot him, his grandchild would ... I, from my point of view see it as a circle; the grandfather falls next to the grandchild, he’ll be a terrorist, terrorist, he’ll be my enemy. That was the dilemma that was post-trauma as I call it now. That was one of the things that influenced me most.’(29)

His reasoning about the situation is interesting and very telling; the fact that Guy made the right decision and did not kill the old man ‘saved our good name’ i.e. the good name of the military unit. Furthermore, had he killed the innocent man, his grandson, in Guy’s opinion, would have become a terrorist. Thus, he does not only think about the good name of the IDF but also about the possible creation of hate and potential terrorists.

7.3 The state

‘The orders are first of all to take care of yourself. To take care not to hurt [someone else], not to make a mistake like I said before and get the state involved.’ (1)

In his work on military ethics, Ignatieff notices a new facet in the history of warfare and this is that ‘moral responsibility is simultaneously a political responsibility. A pilot’s error can potentially jeopardize a whole military campaign’ (2001: 29). This realization of the great political consequences soldiers’ acts can have is deeply ingrained in the consciousness of Israeli soldiers. Here I will discuss these concerns of soldiers and commanders which are, on a more macro level, directed towards the good of the state, its security and its image in the eyes of outsiders, particularly the international community. An example of such reasoning is provided by, for instance, a soldier who is careful about shooting into a crowd in the case of riots because the death of innocents could have political consequences. More important than not killing an innocent person are the political implications such an action could have for the state. Yossi, a commander who was in active combat during Operation Defensive Shield, gives a good example of such reasoning:

‘This was actually the complication of the combat in all the refugee camps. I think that apart from Bethlehem and Jericho and Gaza, I was in all the cities and this was

actually the motto of the combat; to know that you are fighting with civilians around, and to think a thousand times before you shoot for the first time. Because the first shot can lead to a catastrophe. A catastrophe, if you take down [*morid*] a child or if you take down a mother, it can be such a chaos that is not in your league.’(17)

While I do not wish to say here that this commander does not care about killing a child or a mother, his first concern is the chaos this will create, a situation that is ‘out of the ordinary league’ of a soldier. Another example of such reasoning comes from Adam, a commander as well:

‘It has to go to the lower level. In my time the IDF used to say that what one soldier does, can influence a whole country. Because if one soldier for example just shoots for no reason, or would make a mistake, it can go to the state. If someone innocent gets killed, we know where it will be tomorrow. It doesn’t stay with the soldier. That’s why it’s important that everything gets down to the level of the soldier.’(1)

In this quote Adam explains why, in his eyes, it is important to get operational information down to the ‘normal’ soldiers in the field and to not leave them in the dark about what is happening around them and about why this is happening. The reason he gives, which he says was the message of the IDF as a whole during the time he served, is that the consequences of the actions of a soldier can influence something bigger, a whole country sometimes. In other words, if a soldier makes a wrong move, this could, for example, severely impair political negotiations or harm ties with neighbouring countries. He clearly does not agree with the ‘small head’ approach discussed earlier, where soldiers do not look beyond executing the orders that they receive.

Eviatar compliments the military for its awareness of the situation in the OPT and for the way it eases the lives of the Palestinians. However, the same instrumental motivations seen before can also be found in his words:

‘The army is in the good direction. The army has a big awareness, if you see in the media that they opened or finished a closure that comes from the military a lot of times. The army, at least as I felt it, whenever it can, it eases on the Palestinians, gives them a faster passing. It’s true that it’s still from the eyes of the military, so maybe it’s still not the way it should be. But one of the goals, not as a bonus [*chupar*], but as a

goal, is to ease the lives of the Palestinian population. It believes that an easier life for the Palestinians will benefit the security of the region.’ (5)

The goal of the military of easing the lives of Palestinians is in the end, according to this example, more than anything about the security in the region and security for the state of Israel. Hence, I argue, it has an instrumental character.

Offer gives an explanation of the decision-making processes during Operation Defensive Shield and of the way a bad image of Israel in the eyes of the world was created:

‘So afterwards ... [Talking about an operation in which combatants were hurt] there were discussions. To go blow up, not to blow up [*lefotets*]. On the other side if you blow up [*mefotets*] the whole world shouts, “What, you blew it up!” Also in Jenin, even though I wasn’t there but our unit took part in the refugee camp there, and I believe every word they tell me ... afterwards, an Arab director made a film about it, what we did there, I don’t know what.⁹¹ In Europe they said we ... what was the case that they surrounded from all directions and they closed in. The terrorists didn’t flee, they couldn’t flee, there is a ring. They closed in all the time, until there were 10 houses, in a refugee camp, everything is closely built, what are you going to do with that, what go in with soldiers and have a face-to-face fight? So that you will have 30 killed and they will have 30 killed, that’s not ... with all respect to them, our lives are more important than theirs. Not more important, but from our point of view more important. From the point of view of the heaven [literally, sky] it’s the same human being. If I’m in a war, I prefer him to get killed than that I would get killed or my friend. That’s the way it is, he also prefers that an Israeli will get killed than a Palestinian. So they went in with bulldozers, D9, and they destroyed all the houses. What can you do, they told them to surrender,⁹² 2 days, 3, 4 days, [and they stayed in side]. So the state of Israel did a massacre and killed poor children and there were snipers, and 6 years old kids came out and they hit their heads. There is no such thing; it’s not in the education of the military. But that’s what the world sees, for some reason.’ (15)

⁹¹ Offer is talking about the documentary ‘Jenin, Jenin’ by Muhammad Bakri, a Palestinian film-maker from Israel, which caused a lot of commotion in Israel because of its critical stance towards the activities of the IDF. The film was banned from Israeli cinemas and Bakri was even taken to court by a group of reservists who had served during ODS.

⁹² ‘Them’ refers to the Palestinian militants who refused to come out of hiding.

The analysis made by Offer is very telling. It is clear to him that through the media and, for example, a documentary, the international community gets the wrong picture about the activities of the IDF and therefore gives Israel as a whole a bad name. By explaining how the IDF worked and showing the lack of choice the militants gave the military ('them or us'), he tries to show how this negative image, which is a fabrication according to him, was created. Such negative images of the IDF, but also of the state as a whole, are something soldiers are taught to avoid, hence a ban on speaking to journalists and other outsiders who can possibly cause harm through their 'twisting of the story', as we saw before. Great care is, thus, taken by soldiers to avoid misunderstanding about their activities. Their behaviour is also adjusted accordingly.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to outline the instrumental morality that resonates in Israeli soldiers' discourses. I defined instrumental morality as seemingly moral behaviour that was motivated by goals which were directed at serving the good of the self or the in-group. This moral behaviour and reasoning was then divided into three different dimensions as the motivation of soldiers was not only geared towards an ego-centred goal but was often also triggered by feelings of solidarity with comrades or the desire to defend of the state.

Within the personal dimension, the soldiers tried to avoid punishment from superiors, they tried to stay human beings, to avoid becoming 'machines' and, most of all, they tried to keep safe. On this personal level the moral reasoning and actions of soldiers within the OPT was directed towards their own good, their own well-being.

Within the group dimension, soldiers also felt that they needed to protect their comrades, just as commanders showed a strong feeling of responsibility for the well-being of their soldiers. Action was, then, geared towards the safety of the in-group. Furthermore, efforts were made to protect the image of the IDF. Good behaviour was displayed when outsiders, such as human right organizations and reporters, were present in order to avoid giving the IDF a bad name.

Within the more abstract dimension concerning the state, both soldiers and commanders made the same sort of efforts. The realization was that if a soldier made a mistake, this could affect the highest levels and influence the precarious political situation of Israel within the Middle East. 'Good' or 'just' behaviour by soldiers and commanders was often displayed, then, to avoid scrutiny and repercussions on different levels. The 'other', the Palestinian citizen, however, was hardly considered.

One of the factors that seemed of importance here was the disciplinary gaze of soldiers' superiors, the international community or the press. This gaze disciplined the soldiers into

behaving as they thought they should in order to avoid the above mentioned consequences. Their behaviour, then, became instrumental as it was geared to influencing the people behind this gaze.